

## A Tale Of Tears

By: Tirsa Minemann

What is today? Where am I? I found myself asking those questions not too long ago. I miss my family, I miss the smell of clean air unrattled with gunpowder.

Currently it is May 4th of the year 1826. I'm scared. I don't belong here. In this village full of war. My name is Tirsa Alitzel Minemann. I am currently, well, talking to myself, and aware of the sights and smells around me. Yesterday something crazy happened to me and I guess I'm still in the process of organizing my thoughts. Okay, here we go. My memory starts churning and burning. I (somehow) feel a pain in my head. It's pulsing like a ringing in your ears except it's all over me. I get engulfed in a very deja vu-like flashback.

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It all started on May 3rd of 2024 I was walking somewhere (It's not important) and I sneezed and when I opened my eyes I was in a wagon sitting down. I don't know how I got there so I did the most reasonable thing a person can do, I looked around in shock without a sound. From what I could distinguish around me I saw a bunch of people bustling around, open tianguis with colorful china poblana dresses, and some scary looking French men harassing a defenseless man. I looked down at my knees and realized that a jean skirt and sweatshirt weren't going to help me blend in. Before finding out where I was I knew I had to blend in. I needed to survive.

I first went to the tianguis and found myself going against my values and stealing a dress, shawl, flats, and bag off a stand. I found some ribbon on the floor (probably dropped by some little girl) and used it to tie my hair in a braid. By the looks of people around me, that was a popular style.

Hoping that I wouldn't be caught, I heard the voices around me and tried to distinguish a language. I heard some French (I could tell it was French because of the hard q's) a Native language of some sort, and maybe some Spanish? SPANISH is one language I do know! I heard a lady from the stand next to the stand I stole from speaking Spanish. I kept my composure and walked over to her. I remember pretending to look at the jewelry on the stand and looking up to ask her "Buenos dias, Me puedes decir la hora y el dia?" My accent wasn't perfect but it got the job done. The lady looked at me weird ( I don't blame her) and responded with " 3 de mayo 1862" "Gracias Senora". No... no no no no NO! Internally I was screaming. I knew where I was, If you put the pieces in your mind like I did you would make a list...

#### List

- People speak Spanish and french
- French men carrying guns beating up a man
- May 3, 1862

I'm in Puebla, Mexico. During a time of war, the second French Intervention in Mexico. Thank goodness I paid attention in class yesterday. Ok, so if it's May 3 I have two days before everything goes down. I have to survive the Battle of Puebla.

I must've been transported here late so the sun already went down. I decided to try and find some sort of vineyard or stables and ask the owner if I could stay there for the night. Thankfully I found a house with stables so I went and knocked on the door. An old man and his wife came out. The man was tall and had a very cool mustache and the lady a plum shawl and a very extravagant dress. "Buenas noches vengo a pedirte hospedaje en tu establo de caballos no mas por dos noches por favor". I basically asked if I could stay in the stables for two nights. I hoped that they would say yes. They looked like sensible people. They both gave each other a

look and turned around and started whispering to each other. When they turned back the old man asked “Sí pero, te ofresco un pan?” y “¿Dónde están tus padres?” Translation: “Yes, Do you want some bread though?” And “where are your parents?”

I didn't really know how to answer so I said that my parents were dead. Although I knew that they were probably safe at home away from this awful place. The old lady seemed like she was the one who convinced him, she had a look of pity in her eyes. Of course I said yes to the bread and happily ate it. I broke it in half and put half in the fabric napkin they gave me. You never know what can happen or when you'll go hungry so into the bag it goes. They showed me to the stables and even offered me some sort of blanket. I don't know why they were being so nice but at the moment I would take what I got. My eyes started drooping after they left. My realization, My FULL realization kicked in and I started to cry. One tear after another I cried so much you could see a puddle on the floor. I wanna go home, I don't want to smell the gunpowder or horses around me. Just like that, after a long two hours of crying I passed out. Everything went dark.

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Okay now that I caught myself up on everything that happened it's time to face a new day in this past life. Let's get all the hay out of my hair. One by one slowly I took out all the hay. I also (being courteous) folded the blanket-like fabric into a neat rectangle. I got my bag and headed out. The bright sun is blinding. I feel like I'm gonna faint. It's not a good time for my blood pressure to drop. I stumbled but caught myself in time. Thankful that I made it to this day, I started to explore because although I'm scared I have to find some places that will keep me safe from tomorrow. I started walking towards the tianguis in the distance. I have no sense of direction except for when I am in Disneyland, so thank goodness I can see the tall stands of

tianguis. After a deep sleep I feel a little more in control of myself and my emotions. I still see the streets of tianguis except it's calmer, but much more ominous. It's not the same as yesterday. Yesterday was rowdy and fun (with the exception of corruption of a few militia and officials). While today is different, it really is the calm before the storm. The air is tense and eerie.

If I remember correctly around 460 french men died while only 86 mexicans died. It's crazy to think I'm here a day before those deaths took place. I better get an A+ on my Battle of Puebla test. I was walking through the stands looking at all the beautiful antiquities and I saw a barrel. I'm so tired, I'm going to sit down and think about where I should look. I sat down and thought inward to myself. I felt like I was almost sort of meditating. When I was thinking on what to do my stomach started rumbling. "I hope that bread didn't go bad" I thought. While I happily munched on my bread I saw something shiny in a dark alley. I don't know if I should go towards it or not because it might be something dangerous. From what I know there's no flashlights in this century so I probably shouldn't go. Nevermind I'm going "Actually, NO" I told myself. I'm not going and that's final.

I walked away and that's that. Out of the corner of my eye I saw something interesting, Again. Although this time it might possibly be helpful. It was a well, a weirdly shaped well. As I went closer to it I realized that this well was closer to the ground than others. It was way lower. It looked more like a bunker than a well. Maybe this was one of those wells that a person fell into and then they had to cut the top off. When I looked inside there was still very little water in it, maybe like 4-5 cups of water at least. The pulley system was still intact with some beautiful wooden architecture on the poles. It sort of reminded me of the old *Snow White* movie from *Disney*. Actually that movie is in the future technically, but I'm from the future so that's my past future or future past I guess?

Anyway, I realized that if I can find a way to build some sort of top for the well I could turn it into a bunker to keep me safe! I'm glad that the well isn't deep at all or else I would be in trouble. Before I do anything else I have to find a ladder and some sort of light and/or heat source to keep me warm and the space illuminated. For the warmth part I can use the blanket like fabric the old couple let me use, for the ladder I can probably get one from the stables and if it's too tall I can cut it to size. "IT'S PERFECT, MWAHAHAHAHA". I am (Obviously) thinking this in my head to myself because if I said that out loud it would be weird to other people. This is also the perfect location because although it's within the walls of Puebla it's hidden enough to be a good hiding place.

I ran back to the stables, my mind racing with potential ideas. I saw the big beige domicilio. The old couple were nowhere to be seen outside so they must be inside. I entered the stables. I didn't notice it before but there were about 20 horses in these stables fully equipped with their saddles on them. That's weird. Why do they all have their saddles on? What if the old couple were helping the French? Have I been sleeping in the enemy's stables? "Don't trust anyone." Why does that sound familiar? Who said that to me? You know what, I have priorities. I don't have time to think about exactly how I got here. If someone sent me here I don't know how or who but I need to focus on MY survival.

I started moving things around. I'm looking for some type of metal to make a top for the well. "I FOUND IT" I said in a quiet screech. It was a pretty big (and heavy) circle of iron. I also found a ladder and saw so my materials for that are prepared. I got a bucket and filled it with some hay to provide cushioning for the bottom of the well. As for the light source I found an orange on the ground. "What a coincidence right?" I thought to myself. It is a very good thing I

saw that youtube short on how to make a candle out of an orange. I also stole a 3 inch dagger from the stables and put it in my handy dandy bag.

One at a time I started bringing the stuff to my isolated little part of town. I brought the ladder and the saw first and I cut it to size. It was only about 4 inches too long. I then brought the bucket of hay and took the hay out and started scooping out the water. It didn't take too long but it was a workout. I put the hay on the ground to provide cushioning. I ran back to the stables using a back route that I explored earlier to not attract attention. When I arrived at the stables I saw my folded sheet- blanket thing still folded up in a square. I looked outside through the yellow window and saw that the sun was already setting. That dreadful day will come only in a few hours. I have to hurry.

I heard the sound of guerreros (Mexican soldiers) all around me. I heard the loud footsteps of marching forward. I know that this battle starts at daybreak. They are preparing. I got the blanket and metal piece and started running back. I completely discarded the back route and ran through town. Suddenly I stopped. I saw French troops from afar on the border of the town walls. The ones inside the walls were already looking around for orders. I saw a guard spit on the floor with his eyes locked on the people who were frantically getting ready to hide. He was disgusted by even the sight of the guerreros and people getting ready to fight.

I shook off my fear and started running again. I could hear the guerreros and some villagers (men and women) in the background telling them where to position themselves, handing each of them a long gun. I could only see ahead of me everything was moving rapidly around me. I could only see the blurs of people running away. I took a few turns here and there and arrived at my well. I saw a gun, It was just sitting there with a few bullets left. Although I don't really know how to shoot or manage this type of gun. I'm bringing it with me in the well. I

looked inside the well and threw the blanket down. This is a bad plan but I hope it works. I flinged the gun on my back and started down the ladder.

After I took 3 steps down the ladder I took the metal piece and placed it on top. It was so large and I've never lifted anything that heavy. When it finally was aligned with the well I heard a huge THUNK. It reverberated throughout the well and gave me a pounding headache. It was pitch black. I couldn't see anything. With much hesitation I started down the ladder as blind as a mole in bright light. When I finally made it down to the hay I sat down and tried to collect myself. I started the candle while moving away an amount of hay so it doesn't catch on fire and burn me alive. I could finally see around me and I saw that every crack on the well was filled with moss. It was beautiful how life could still spring in this dead well with no use except to hide me away. I will still hope to survive the next day and someday go back home... Time has passed and I think the day might break soon. I hear the shouting of soldiers on both sides. The French troops have arrived.

The time has come. I smell the sickening smells of gunpowder, the screams of battle and the cries of women and children trying to escape the piercing screech of a bullet. I'm alone in this well of peace and prosperity surrounded by war and anger. My anger, sadness, relief, fear and happiness all come together as one and putting my face towards my knees. I start to cry...again. When I cry I stifle it so as to not alert anyone who may be outside. I snuffed out the candle. I have to stop crying, it's too high risk. If I get found out it's not GAME over, it's LIFE over.

One of my eyes started to feel dry and then followed the others. I know it's "healthy" to cry since it releases some toxins but it is definitely not healthy to cry as much as I have. Not when it makes me feel lightheaded to the point of wanting to faint. I relit the candle. The flames

look like they are dancing. I've always thought fire was beautiful, the way it moves, the sunset color of the flame, and the fact that it can bring light and warmth but can also bring destruction and distress. My fingers slowly move towards the candle. I feel its warmth, it gives me a sense of calm in this havoc. I suddenly draw back my fingers when I turn over my hand I see a red mark on my index finger. For someone with absolutely no pain tolerance I am surprised to have not felt anything at all. I didn't cry or even let out a peep. I guess I have no more energy for anything anymore.

I closed my eyes. Whenever I close my eyes my other senses heighten. Now I can feel the sting of the burn. I can still clearly hear the soldiers shouting. I heard a leaf crunch but it wasn't from the wind. I clearly hear the sound of someone approaching, and rapidly. I quickly snuff out the candle (once again). I'm so close I cannot let anyone find me. Immediately I lay down a little more hoping I blend in with the bottom of the dark well. "¡AQUÍ! ¡CREO QUE ALGUIEN ESTÁ ADENTRO!" When I heard one of the soldiers say that I froze. "Please don't come closer" I whispered. I heard a pair of footsteps coming closer and closer. I heard the screeching sound of metal being lifted and then dropped? I heard a huge voice screaming at them from the other side of the top. The soldiers dropped the metal back on the well! I heard them run very swiftly to those screams. I'm safe.. For now. There is no doubt in my mind that those soldiers' curiosity will peak and come back to uncover the secret in the well. I've made up my mind. I have to move before they find me.

I got my bag and packed everything inside. I'm glad my sheet of fabric can fold into my bag. As I felt around for the candle I burnt myself with the hot oil. My second burn in a span of 4 minutes. Besides the pain, I now have everything I need in my bag. My eyesight has already



adjusted to the pitch black of the well. I spread out the hay across the bottom of the well. I started up the ladder with all my things and tried to once again lift the heavy, circular, metal top. This time it was much easier to lift it because all I had to do was push up. It did exert quite a loud creaking sound which scared me so much that someone would find me out. But nevertheless out of necessity I lifted it up and quickly got out of the well. "I'm glad that's over" I sighed. I ran to a nearby corner. It's time to figure out my next move.

"Is there anywhere I can go to be safe?" I ponder. Last I remember the nearest mountain range is still too far for me to walk to. My only option I have right now is to hide somewhere in the village. I stand and run. My feet start moving fastly and violently. Everything blurs around me. I look around for an alley, a broken house, anything. I need to find something to hide in.

Suddenly I'm in the warzone. Everything around me is loud and disruptive. Bullets shooting everywhere. The dirt is up in the air creating a huge cloud of dust. It blinds my eyes. I feel the heat of the burn, the sting in my eyes. I desperately try to blink the dirt out of my eyes. I rub my hands on my eyes but that only makes it worse. When my eyes are open I can only see blurs like when I was running. After about 3 minutes I'm glad to feel that my eyes are clear again. I see that it is getting darker, the sun is setting.

I continue running through the battleground when I see a bunch of guerreros running behind me and French soldiers in front of me. Their commander's both shout at the same time "FIRE". I know what that means. I start running again faster than my best, faster than I ever could. I hear the screech of bullets, the ones that I won't let pierce me. "I WON'T DIE, NOT TODAY" I shouted. Just as I ran I felt a shock pulsing through my body. My ears started ringing once again, I felt the sting dirt as I passed by a broken building. I looked back at that building

slowing down. There was a metal pole sticking out of the ruined walls. "I must have scraped myself," I thought.

I finally arrived at the border of the town. After all that running I've finally made it to some type of rock structure! I'm finally away from all the havoc. I see a cave high up in the middle of the rock. I see a ledge and grab on to it. I've never been good or even okay at rock climbing ever but, here goes nothing. I start to grab on and start climbing slowly but steadily. I feel a sharp pain where my scrape is. I feel something warm running down my arm into my dress. "It's probably nothing serious, just some sweat" I muttered. I could see the long ledge of the cave. I'm almost there. I'm almost secure. I'm so close. I reached out my hand for the last climb and I paused and screamed "I DID IT!". Just then my hand started slipping and just like that my hand let go of its grip. I started falling down until I hit the ground with a huge thump. I heard something crack. I shouted out in pain, pain I've never felt before.

"ARGGGG" I winced. "I'm going to die. I'm gonna DIE!" I started to cry, tears were flowing down my cheeks. I can only imagine how I look right now. I probably look helpless, (which is how I feel)... "NO I WILL NOT GIVE UP NOT WHEN I'M SO CLOSE" I grunted. I started to sit up and then started to stand. I slowly start walking up to the rock and start climbing once again. One hand after another I start crawling my way up to the cave every muscle, cell, and bone in my body hurting. "I'm almost there," I tell myself. Once again I see the cave's ledge, "Ok Tirsa don't celebrate too early this time" I think. I pull myself up onto the ledge and lay down flatly. I stare at the sky and then to the cave next to me. The cave is small and narrow, I'm afraid of what lies within but safety first. I look towards the town in the distance and see it in flames. There it is again. The fire.

I go into the cave still wincing at every step. I'm exhausted. I close my eyes and take a well deserved nap... I wake up, and I hear buzzing. I look around and I see no bees, bugs, or any other creepy crawlies. Relieved, I put my hand to the floor to give me a little lift to stand up. "Ouch!" I cry out. I sit down to find a huge open wound on my left hand with blood on my fingertips. It is a bright red and it is very warm. I start feeling light headed because of the combination of shock and pain all coming together. I feel a river of warmth on my right clavicle. It must be the scrape from earlier I thought. When I look over to my right I feel an immense pain, I look down and see a pool of blood under me. "Why didn't I notice it before?" I muttered groggily. My arm is drenched in red, and my white dress is stained red. I can no longer see the blue and yellow embroidery of flowers. I look up at the cave, down to my knees, and back to the town. My eyes start tearing up and I close them. "I want to go home and see my family. " I cry. Everything goes black.

My eyes open groggily and there I lay, flat on the ground. My everything hurts. I hear muffled voices crying and someone calling the police. I could barely make out anything but I could figure out that the people crying were my family. MY FAMILY! I'M HOME! I'm finally home, I don't know how I got back but I know that I did time travel. I still felt the pain and a new puddle of blood underneath me. I saw my mom's and sister's face rush close to mine. The tears streaming through their eyes. "SHES AWAKE!" my sister shouted. When I started closing my eyes again I heard the sound of the ambulance from afar. I know I'm going to be okay. I'm safe. I survived. Groggily I managed to let out a few words before the ambulance took me. "Mom, Dad, It's okay I'm safe."

END